



# Hurricane Cares and Concerns

## *A Preparedness Guide*

### Before the Storm

#### Hurricane Survival Checklist

If you live in a mobile home, **LEAVE**. Go to a friend's home, a hotel or a shelter. If you do not live in a mobile home and local officials have not asked you to evacuate, you can remain in your home during a hurricane. Make sure to stock your home with the following items during the six-month hurricane season (**June-November**):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cash or travelers checks. (In a power outage, automated teller machines (ATMs) and "pay at the pump" systems will not work.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ A battery operated radio and spare batteries
- \_\_\_\_\_ A flashlight for each person and spare batteries
- \_\_\_\_\_ Candles and safe candle holders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Battery operated lanterns
- \_\_\_\_\_ A week's supply of bottled water, at least 1 gallon per person per day
- \_\_\_\_\_ A fire extinguisher
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least one week's supply of non-perishable food, plus a manual can opener, paper plates, plastic cups and utensils. Good food choices include bread, crackers, peanut butter, canned fruit, raisins and other dried fruit, canned beans, beverages such as fruit juices and milk in cans and boxes, canned soup, granola bars, cold cereal, instant coffee, hard candy, tea bags, cookies, seasonings, canned stews, canned tuna, and other canned meats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plenty of plastic containers to hold the dry foods, spare batteries, duct tape, matches, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A four-week supply of prescription medications in their original bottles
- \_\_\_\_\_ A first aid kit
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rain gear
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trash bags
- \_\_\_\_\_ Matches in a waterproof container
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pet food
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insect repellent
- \_\_\_\_\_ An alternate cooking source such as a charcoal grill (don't forget the charcoal), camp stove or gas grill.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Always use these appliances outdoors and away from carports, garages, vehicles, and fireplaces.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some ice and a cooler
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plastic tarps or sheeting and a staple gun with staples
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unscented chlorine bleach, iodine tablets or other water purification aids
- \_\_\_\_\_ Books and games for your children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Infant supplies, including pre-mixed (liquid) formula
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunscreen

- \_\_\_\_\_ A camera and film. (You may want to take pictures of the interior and exterior of your home for insurance purposes.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Toilet paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paper towels
- \_\_\_\_\_ Moist towelettes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Duct tape
- \_\_\_\_\_ A sewing kit
- \_\_\_\_\_ A hat and work gloves
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sunglasses
- \_\_\_\_\_ A waterproof container for important documents and irreplaceable photographs. You will need to protect your children's immunization records, passports, wills, insurance policies, deeds, contracts, stocks and bonds, social security cards, copies of recent tax returns, birth and marriage certificates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bedding or sleeping bags
- \_\_\_\_\_ A working carbon monoxide detector
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extra clothing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paper and pens
- \_\_\_\_\_ A basic tool kit
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal hygiene and toiletry items, such as toothbrushes and shampoo
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spare contact lenses and/or eyeglasses and a copy of the prescription, if you have it
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cleaning supplies including disinfectant, towels, buckets, mops, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Phone numbers of family, physicians and friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ A list of nearby shelters and evacuation routes, just in case

#### Planned Evacuation Checklist

If you know ahead of time that you will evacuate during the storm, do the following before leaving:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Fill the gas tank of your car.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Store home and lawn care chemicals above areas that could be flooded.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shut off the water to the house. (Contact your utility for instructions.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow the instructions provided by local utility companies or emergency preparedness officials regarding the turning off of electric and gas utilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do **NOT** turn off natural gas at the meter. If you feel your home may flood, turn off the gas to the appliances.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Turn off propane tanks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disconnect all appliances except the refrigerator and freezer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Let people know when you are leaving and where you are going.

## Before the Storm

### Planned Evacuation Checklist (continued)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lock the windows and doors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put plastic bags over televisions, stereos, lamps, computers, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fill the sinks and bathtubs with water to use for bathing, washing clothes and flushing when you return.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pack some clothes and shoes in plastic bags and store on high shelves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find a secure place for boats or second cars.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trim weak limbs from trees and shrubs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cover windows and doors with shutters or plywood, if possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bring inside or otherwise secure outdoor items such as bird feeders, bicycles, grills and planters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take with you proof of residence, social security cards, insurance policies, birth and marriage certificates, stocks, bonds and other financial certificates, irreplaceable photographs, wills, deeds and copies of recent tax returns.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure your neighbors have safe transportation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take your survival supplies in the car with you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take a map, a list of shelters and official evacuation routes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take cash and/or traveler's checks. (Remember, ATMs and "pay at the pump" services will not work in a power outage.)

### Emergency Evacuation Checklist

If you have only moments to prepare before leaving, grab as many of these things as you can and go!

- \_\_\_\_\_ Prescription medications, dentures, eyeglasses, hearing aids, over-the-counter medication you take regularly, and personal hygiene items
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flashlights, batteries, a battery-operated radio, a first aid kit, and bottled water
- \_\_\_\_\_ A change of clothes, and a sleeping bag or blankets and pillow for each member of the household
- \_\_\_\_\_ Car keys and, if you have them, keys to the place you are going

### Shelter Tips

If you plan to evacuate to a Red Cross community shelter take these items with you:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Pillows and blankets or sleeping bags
- \_\_\_\_\_ An air float or air mattress, if you want (Remember, you probably will have to sleep on a floor.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prescribed medications in their original bottles
- \_\_\_\_\_ A flashlight and batteries
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soap and towels
- \_\_\_\_\_ Toothbrushes, denture supplies and other personal hygiene items
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disposable cleaning cloths, such as baby wipes, to use if bathing facilities are not available

- \_\_\_\_\_ Food, formulas or supplements for infants, elderly people or people on special diets
- \_\_\_\_\_ Books, quiet toys, and games for children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Extra contact lenses or eyeglasses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Non-perishable snack foods and bottled water.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Baby supplies, including diapers, pre-mixed, canned formula and sleep-related items
- \_\_\_\_\_ A change of clothes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lightweight folding chairs and/or cots, if you want (Remember, you probably will have to sit and sleep on a floor.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Road maps and directions to shelters
- \_\_\_\_\_ Important legal documents, social security cards, proof of residence, and irreplaceable photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Any phone numbers you think you may need

### Suggestions For Safe Travel

- Travel during daylight hours, if at all possible.
- If you are planning to travel by a hired vehicle such as a taxi or ambulance, make arrangements in advance. (Many other people will be trying to do the same.) Keep in mind, however, that if a mandatory evacuation is ordered, drivers and other employees of cab, limousine and ambulance companies may also need to evacuate.
- If you expect to travel in your own vehicle, plan on leaving early, during the voluntary evacuation stage. Drowning accounts for most hurricane-related deaths, and most of the people who drown do so while attempting to drive their vehicles through rushing and rising water.
- If you are worried about being stranded, call your county emergency management team. Listen to the radio for instructions and contact information.

### Tips On Keeping Pets Safe In An Evacuation

- As well as planning for your family, you must also make plans for your pets. **NEVER LEAVE A PET UNATTENDED IN AN EVACUATION.**
- Official shelters normally do not allow pets, so try to make alternative arrangements for pets to stay with family, friends, veterinarians or kennels in safe locations.
- Find a pet-friendly hotel. Call hotels in a safe location and ask if you can bring your pet. If the hotel has a no-pets policy, ask the manager if the hotel can waive the policy during the crisis. Very often, hotels managers relax rules in these situations.
- Make sure you take pet food, litter, cages or carriers, rabies certificates, leashes, collars with identification tags, and favorite toys with you. A photo of your pet is also a good idea, in case you are separated from the animal.

## After the Storm

### If your home has been flooded...

If your home has been flooded, **do not eat** any food that might have come in contact with floodwater including:

- Food packaged in paper, cloth, or cardboard boxes
- Home-canned foods
- Flour, grains, sugar and coffee in canisters or bags
- Fresh meat, poultry and fish
- Any food in foil or cellophane
- Fresh fruits and vegetables that do not have a peel or shell that can be removed before eating
- Products with screw caps, twist caps, flip tops or snap lids. This includes products like sodas, bottled or canned juices, seasonings, bottled water, condiments (i.e., mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise), peanut butter and jellies

Some food and food-related items can be cleaned and sanitized. **Follow these steps:**

1. To salvage commercially canned foods without dents, leaks or bulges, remove the label, then wash the cans in warm soapy water and rinse with clean water. Soak for 30-60 seconds in a solution of 1 ounce of unscented chlorine bleach to six gallons of water. Finally, re-label the cans with a permanent marker, making sure to include the expiration date.
2. Wash and disinfect all non-food items made from non-porous material, such as tableware, china, glasses, silverware or other metal utensils.
3. Throw away any plastic utensils, paper and plastic plates, wooden bowls, kitchen tools, and any other non-food items made from a porous material.

### If Your Home Has Been Without Power...

Contact all your utility companies for guidance on when and how to turn on water, electricity and natural gas.

#### Foods in the Freezer

- If you keep your freezer door shut as much as possible, foods could stay frozen for one to three days, depending on:
  - The length of time the freezer door is open
  - The amount of food in the freezer. (When densely packed, foods stay frozen longer.)
  - The room temperature outside of the freezer; and
  - The freezer's insulation system.
- Frozen foods that have thawed but are still completely chilled (no warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit) should be:
  - Cooked, then frozen, **or**
  - Prepared and eaten, **or**
  - Thrown away

- Partially frozen foods such as fruits, vegetables or meat that still have ice crystals on them can be re-frozen.
- Do **not** re-freeze ice cream or frozen dinners.
- Use block ice or dry ice if available to preserve frozen food. Twenty-five pounds of dry ice will keep a 10 cubic foot freezer below freezing for three to four days. Wear dry, heavy gloves when handling dry ice.

#### Foods in the Refrigerator

- Keep the refrigerator door shut as much as possible. This could allow the food to stay chilled for four to six hours.
- Throw away any of the following foods that have been at room temperature for two or more hours:
  - Raw or cooked meat, poultry, seafood, meat-topped pizza or lunch meats
  - Casseroles, soups and stews
  - Milk, cream, yogurt, soft cheeses and cottage cheese
  - Mayonnaise, tartar sauce and creamy dressings
  - Cooked pasta, potatoes, rice and salads
  - Cookie dough
  - Eggs and egg substitutes
  - Custards, cream filled pastries, chiffon and cheese pie.
  - Gravy
- Discard any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture.
- **DO NOT TASTE THESE FOODS!** You **can't** always detect bacteria by smell, taste or sight.
- The following foods can be stored at room temperature for two to three days and still be safe so long as they have not been touched by flood waters:
  - Butter and margarine
  - Hard and processed cheeses
  - Fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Fruit juices
  - Dried fruits and coconut
  - Fresh herbs and spices
  - Opened jars of vinegar-based salad dressing, peanut butter, jelly, relish, mustard, ketchup, olives and barbecue sauce
  - Flour and nuts
  - Fruit pies
  - Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins and bagels

#### Cooking Without Power

Follow these simple guidelines so you can safely prepare food without electricity or gas

- Charcoal and gas grills or camp stoves are great alternatives, but keep them **outside**, away from garages, carports, vehicles, tents or fireplaces. **NEVER USE THEM INDOORS.** They could cause a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

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**Food Safety Tip:**  
**When in Doubt, Throw It Out!**

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## After the Storm

### Cooking Without Power (continued)

- If you have a fireplace and the chimney escaped damage in the storm, you can use it to cook. Make sure the damper is open.
- If you have to build a fire outdoors, build it away from any structures, including carports. Make sure the fire is well contained in a metal drum or encircled with stones or other barriers. You can also build a wood fire in a charcoal grill.

### Don't Drink the Water Until You're Sure It's Safe

After a hurricane, all water sources should be considered unsafe until they have been tested and until the proper authorities tell you it is OK to drink. Until then, follow these tips to stay healthier:

- You can safely drink distilled or bottled water that has not come into contact with floodwater.
- Use only bottled water to prepare infant formula.
- Never give pets untreated water to drink.
- You can make water bacterially safer in three ways:
  1. Bring water to a rolling boil, cover it, and boil it for at least two minutes. **THIS IS THE ONLY SURE WAY TO KILL HARMFUL ORGANISMS.**
  2. Add plain, unscented liquid chlorine bleach to water at a rate of 1/4 teaspoon per gallon. Then shake and let stand for 30 minutes. A slight chlorine odor should be detected. If you can't smell the chlorine slightly, repeat the process and let stand for another 15 minutes. You can improve the taste of the water by adding a pinch of salt, then pouring the water from one container to another several times.
  3. Add iodine at five drops per quart for clear water and 10 drops per quart for cloudy water. Let the treated water stand for 30 minutes.
- Strain cloudy water by pouring through a clean cloth.
- Do not swim or bathe in rivers, streams, creeks, lakes or the ocean until public health authorities announce that the water is safe.

- Brush your teeth, bathe, wash dishes and cook with treated water only.
- Rinse water containers with a bleach solution before using and reusing them.
- If you're caught without a stored supply of clean water, you can use water from your hot water tank and pipes, or water from moving streams and rivers. Water from these sources must be purified.

### Other Vital Safety Tips

- Do not use gas powered generators or pressure washers inside, on a carport or inside a garage.
- Stay away from wild animals. They may be disoriented or could have rabies.
- Watch out for snakes. They often hide in unusual places after flooding.
- Don't leave pet food or dead animal carcasses in your yard. The scent will attract rats and other wild animals.
- If you smell gas, turn off the main gas valve, open all windows and leave the house immediately. Notify the police, fire department and gas company and stay away until an expert tells you its safe to return.
- Do not disturb potential chemical hazards, such as solvents. Call the local fire department for help.
- If you need to move a propane tank, whatever the size, call the fire department to help you.
- Watch out for downed power lines. Do not drive through standing water if downed power lines are in the water.
- If you have a well, it may be contaminated. Do not use the water from the well until it has been tested. For information on how to have your water tested, or how to disinfect your well, contact **DHEC's Bureau of Water** at 1-888-761-5989. If you have access to the Internet, go to <http://www.scdhec.gov/water/pubs/cr003247.pdf>



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